



*Stephanie Rawlings-Blake
Mayor*

PLANNING COMMISSION

Wilbur E. "Bill" Cunningham, Chairman



*Thomas J. Stosur
Director*

STAFF REPORT

November 18, 2010

REQUEST: Minor Amendment/Harbor Point PUD – US Lacrosse

RECOMMENDATION: Approval; subject to Critical Area Requirements

STAFF: Robert Quilter

PETITIONER: Harbor Point Development LLC.

OWNERS: Honeywell International, Inc., Thames Street Wharf LLC, Block Street Apartments LLC, Wills Street Pier LLC, Harbor Point Development LLC, The Black Olive Development Company, LLC

SITE/ GENERAL AREA

Site Conditions: To date, the Harbor Point PUD is only improved by the Thames Street Wharf office building at the western end of Thames Street and a facility maintenance building to the north. The rest of the site contains surface parking and temporary promenade. The site is divided by on-cap and off-cap portions that reflect the environmental clean-up that occurred for many years previous to any development.

General Area: The Harbor Point PUD is located on the western peninsula of the Fells Point community. Across Caroline Street to the east of the site is the heart of the Fells Point Historic District, to the north is the Living Classrooms Foundation main campus and beyond is the Harbor East development area. The Ferndale Fence property and The Living Classroom Foundation's Frederick Douglass Isaac Myers Maritime Park is located immediately to the southeast.

HISTORY:

- Ordinance #93-260, approved August 1993, established the Allied and related sites Planned Unit Development.
- Ordinance #04-0682, approved May 10, 2004, repealed the original Allied PUD and replaced it with the Harbor Point PUD
- On May 18, 2006, the Planning Commission approved a Minor Amendment and Final Design Approval for the Thames Street Wharf Building and Street Closings for Dock, Willis, Block and Philpot Streets within the Harbor Point PUD

- Ordinance #07-429, approved May 17, 2007, implemented the rezoning for Historic Southeast Baltimore Ordinance #07-555, approved November 26, 2007, established Fells Point as a Baltimore City Local Historic District
- Ordinance #07-575, approved November 27, 2007, re-established the Fells Point Urban Renewal Plan
- Ordinance #07- 625, approved December 3, 2007 amended the Development Plan of the Harbor Point PUD
- On March 6, 2008, the Planning Commission approved the Final Design for 803 South Caroline Street – The Black Olive Inn
- Ordinance #08-16, signed by the Mayor to the City Council on May 27, 2008, was Amendment #2 to the PUD and expanded the boundaries to include 803 South Caroline Street – The Black Olive Inn
- Ordinance #09-153, signed by the Mayor to the City Council on April 7, 2009 authorized the sale of the property known as 950 South Caroline Street
- On February 18, 2010, the Planning Commission approved the Minor Amendment and Revised Final Design Approval for Harbor Point PUD – Thames Street Wharf
- On October 21, 2010, the Planning Commission recommended approval of City Council Bill #10-0594/Harbor Point Development District

CONFORMITY TO PLANS

This Minor Amendment for the US Lacrosse component of the Harbor Point PUD is consistent with the overall goals of the Harbor Point PUD. It also addresses the Comprehensive Plan's LIVE section, Goal 1 – Build Human and Social Capital by Strengthening Neighborhoods, Objective 2 – Strategically Redevelop Vacant Properties Throughout the City.

ANALYSIS

Harbor Point is an established PUD at the western tip of Fells Point that proposes up to 1.82 million square feet of office, residential and hotel development with some 3,800 parking spaces. The ±25.8 acre PUD will also include a “cultural use,” significant amount of open space, a new street network with connections to existing streets and a waterfront promenade. To date, the Thames Street Wharf office building opened in late spring 2010 at the southeast corner of the PUD and its site improvements included a brick waterfront promenade and an adjacent temporary paved parking area and temporary promenade. Other than a facility monitoring building located in the northeastern portion of the PUD and the nearing-completion Black Olive Inn at 803 South Caroline Street, the remainder of the site is currently vacant and partially used for temporary parking.

This proposed Minor Amendment to the Harbor Point Planned Unit Development (PUD) would adjust the PUD's current Development Plan to accommodate a new headquarters for US Lacrosse, a non-profit that is currently based around the Johns Hopkins University Campus here in Baltimore.

The program for US Lacrosse includes the following:

- A 7,000 square foot museum relating the history of the sport of lacrosse;
- 35,000 square feet of adjacent office space for this cultural non-profit organization in a four story building;

- A 1.785 acre professional artificial turf playing field that is primarily anticipated for lacrosse use but may also be used for other events and general public use. This field may or may not be fenced and that is a point that will be clarified through Final Design Approval;
- Additional adjacent open space for public viewing areas, gathering areas and landscaping.

PUD Compliance – Planning and BDC staff has reviewed this proposal and finds it consistent with the general parameters of the Harbor Point PUD.

Cultural Use Component - The Harbor Point PUD has always anticipated that a “Cultural Use” would be a significant part of the open space component that is required. A place saver of 1.8 acres has been designated for it on the existing Development Plan at the northern end of the Open Space Area. US Lacrosse would like to fulfill that “Cultural Use” with its museum/office headquarters building and it proposes to shift its location through this Minor Amendment to the eastern portion of the Open Space Area. The building site is about one acre of development and is therefore less than the allowed 1.8 acres. To accommodate the building and site program for US Lacrosse, the proposed street pattern for Harbor Point will be modified. The current Development Plan shows Thames Street extending into the site (although at a different elevation) and Block Street extending from Caroline as well, creating development blocks between these streets. The proposed Development Plan now shows the portion of the project east of Wills Street staying the same, but the street pattern shifting to the north west of Wills, compressing Parcel 2 and enlarging Parcel 3 and the open space area.

Open Space Component – The Harbor Point PUD includes a required 9.3 acres of publicly-accessible open space. The US Lacrosse program also consists of a 1.785 acre artificial turf playing field and accessory open space for sidelines, viewing and landscaping. This Minor Amendment proposes that the field be located within the required 9.3 acre Open Space component. The field would be “depressed” into the built-up landscape of the Harbor Point on-cap portion of the site, creating a shallow bowl effect. It has not been determined at this time whether the field would require fencing or securing. It is also proposed that the field will be publicly-owned and maintained and accessible for US Lacrosse, public/private leagues and the general public. It will be a somewhat flexible field, accommodating different sports venues and activities. The complete design for the field, including possible securing, landscaping, seating, signage, scoreboards and lighting will be part of a future Final Design Approval.

Additionally, the development team has reached agreement with community groups for designated “community park space”. This is now Note #3 on the PUD Land Use Sheet #3 that states:

“Developer is to reserve approximately 2 acres of community park space in the area indicated, to be designed and programmed with input from the affected community groups as identified by the Director of Planning. Although the location and configuration of the artificial turf field and other components of the open space and/or building parcels will be modified as the design progresses, the location of the above community park space will remain as indicated.”

Promenade Component – Consistent with the requirements of the Harbor Point PUD and the Fells Point Waterfront Urban Renewal Plan, a minimum twenty foot promenade easement will be required at the water's edge and be located to connect to promenades of adjacent parcels. A permanently constructed pedestrian walkway and accompanying landscaping and public amenities will be provided within that easement area. The location and design of the easement improvements and drafting of the easement agreement will be required for the Final Design Approval of this project.

Critical Area Requirements – As a result of the further identification of the open space, including the newly required community park space, the applicant must reassess and continue to comply with Critical Area requirements.

Parking Component – The conceptual plan shows a servicing area and a minimum number of parking spaces immediately to the east of the building site. As the built-out PUD will contain some 3800 parking spaces (on and off-street), parking for this use is expected to be within those areas. Bus drop-off for events at this facility is planned for the service area as well.

Traffic Impact – This use falls within the program that generated the Traffic Impact Study for the entire Harbor Point PUD. However, the applicant should reassess changes resulting from this Minor Amendment and make sure that the project continues to be compliant with the City's Traffic Impact legislation.

Sustainability Requirements: Project architects have continued to aggressively incorporate sustainable practices transparently into their drawings, specifications and materials and furnishings, pushing the requirements to the greatest extent possible. In any event, the project must meet Baltimore City's new green building requirements.

Community Involvement – Planning, BDC and the development team have worked diligently with the Fells Point and neighboring community groups to solicit input for this proposal. An outcome of the community review process is the designation of Note #3 on the new PUD Revised Land Use Plan. This note is stated above in the Open Space Component section.

The following community organizations were notified of this meeting: Fells Point Task Force, Douglass Place Community Association, Perkins Homes Resident Advisory Council, Fells Point Community Organization, Fells Point Residents Association, Fells Point Main Street, The Preservation Society, Waterfront Coalition, Fells Prospect, Inc., Upper Fells Point Improvement Association, 1400 Lancaster Condominium, Albemarle Square, Southeast Community Development Corporation, Little Italy Business Association, Little Italy Restaurant Association, Little Italy Community Organization and Scarlett Place RCA, Inc.

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Director